



## **JOINT INFORMATIONAL HEARING**

### **SENATE COMMITTEES ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND BUDGET AND FISCAL REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 2**

**SENATORS STEINBERG AND LOWENTHAL, Chairs**

**March 11, 2008**

Statement of  
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The State of California is faced with a critical problem, the need to further control, conserve, and distribute the waters of the State. This problem is not new, but never before has it reached such widespread and serious proportions. Its critical nature stems not only from the State's continued growth in population, industry, and agriculture, but also from the consequences of ecological decline in the Delta and our changing climate. Today, the future of California hinges on a highly important decision, which is within your power to make. We can move forward with a thriving economy by pursuing a vigorous, comprehensive water infrastructure program, or we can allow our economy to stagnate by maintaining a complacent attitude and the status quo. From the perspective of Westlands Water District, the choice of these alternatives is clear: the State must invest in a comprehensive, statewide water development program that takes advantage of every available tool, including conservation, recycling, groundwater cleanup, desalinization, and storage, both surface and subsurface. In addition, we must fix the Delta and water conveyance.

For this reason, Westlands supports the comprehensive approach outlined in Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's February 28, 2008, letter for addressing California's water supply and the environmental crisis in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers Delta. On these issues Governor Schwarzenegger is demonstrating the kind of leadership demonstrated by his predecessor, Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown. Like Governor Brown, Governor Schwarzenegger understands that if we are going to sustain the economy of the State, we must invest in water infrastructure and we cannot allow the parochial interests of a few to frustrate improvements in our water supply and the Delta ecosystem. He also understands that the now is the time for action.

Of particular, immediate importance is improving Delta conveyance. The Governor has directed that the Department of Water Resources analyze a full range of alternatives for

improving our ability to move water from where it is appropriated to where demand for the water exists. Recent history has demonstrated that improving Delta conveyance would provide immediate water supply benefits. Of equal importance, improving Delta conveyance would provide immediate water quality and ecosystem benefits. At the end of the day, Westlands believes that the analysis will show that an isolated or dual water conveyance system will provide the greatest water supply, water quality, and ecosystem improvements. The analyses done to date have lead to that conclusion. However, Westlands is willing to keep an open mind on this question, and we ask that others do the same.

Leadership often involves making difficult choices. Without question, choices regarding water supply and Delta ecosystem improvements need to be well informed, and the approach described in the Governor's February 28, 2008, letter will yield the information required to make those choices. Westlands greatly appreciates the Governor's hard work and leadership on these issues, and it welcomes the opportunity to work with the administration and legislature to achieve an outcome that will enable the State to grow and prosper, while at the same time improving the Delta's ecosystem.